

Message Text

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ACTION AGR-20

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FM AMEMBASSY WARSAW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4097

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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E. O. 11652: DECON 5/24/74

TAGS: EAGR, PL

SUBJECT: MEAT SITUATION AND EXPORTS

PASS AGRICULTURE

1. POLISH EXPORTS OF MEAT TO USSR HAVE BEEN WIDELY BUT UNRESPONSIBLY RUMORED OVER PAST SEVERAL MONTHS. WE EVEN HEARD SATIRICAL POEM ON SUBJECT. AGATT TRICK LAST FRIDAY AT ARMED FORCES DAY RECEPTION ASKED SOVIET EMBASSY DCM B. LOGUINOV IF USSR HAD IMPORTED MEAT FROM POLAND THIS YEAR OR LAST FALL. HE REPLIED EMPHATICALLY THAT THIS WAS NOT THE CASE, SAYING THAT POTATOES AND SUGAR WERE ONLY POLISH FOOD COMMODITIES EXPORTS TO RUSSIA DURING PERIOD AND THAT SUCH TRADE IN OTHER DIRECTION INCLUDED GRAIN, BUTTER, AND VEGE-TALE OILS.
2. TRICK SEPARATELY QUERIED OPERATING HEADS OF POLISH MEAT BOARD (INDUSTRY) AND VETERINARY SERVICE. BOTH DENIED THAT GOP WAS EXPORTING MEAT TO SOVIET UNION. BASIS ABOVE STATE-MENTS AND FACT THAT HE UNABLE TO CONFIRM SUCH EXPORTS THROUGH SAME UNOFFICIAL SOURCES FROM WHICH WE LEARNED ABOUT POLISH POTATO SHIPMENTS, IT IS CONSIDERED THAT THESE RUMORS ARE FALSE.
3. FYI, POLISH NATIONAL WHO VISITED VILNIUS (VILNO) BETWEEN ABOUT 5/10 AND 5/20 REPORTED TO EMBASSY EMPLOYEE TODAY THAT THERE

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WAS NO MEAT OR SAUSAGES IN STORES DESPITE LONG QUEUES DURING THIS PERIOD BUT INDICATED THAT SITUATION HAD BEEN FAIRLY GOOD AT LEAST THROUGH END OF 1972. RESTAURANTS WERE SERVING MEATS WHEN HE WAS THERE.

4. WARSAW RETAIL MEAT SUPPLIES, INCLUDING BEEF, HAVE DEFINITELY IMPROVED SINCE SUBMISSION OF WARSAW 1640, AND ARE CONSIDERED TO BE BACK AT THE MARGINALLY SATISFACTORY LEVELS OF 1972 WITH POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF BEEF. GENERAL SITUATION IN SMALL TOWNS IS NOT KNOWN, BUT IN VIEW OF RECENT GOP ADMISSIONS OF INADEQUACIES IN SUCH AREAS, WE ASSUME THAT RETAIL AVAILABILITIES THERE ARE POOR. THERE ARE NO OFFICIAL OR UNOFFICIAL INDICATIONS THAT UPTREND IN POLISH LIVESTOCK OUTPUT, PARTICULARLY SWINE, IS ENDING BUT CURVE IS FLATTENING SOMEWHAT AS EXPECTED. GOP REPORTS OF TOTAL STATE RED MEAT PURCHASES DURING FIRST QUARTER OF 1973 REFLECT 8.4 PERCENT INCREASE OVER SAME PERIOD OF 1972, 475,000 COMPARED TO 438,000 METRIC TONS RESPECTIVELY (SLAUGHTER WEIGHT BASIS). ANNOUNCED RESULTS OF REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLING OF ANIMAL NUMBERS ON PRIVATE FARMS IN MARCH COMPARED TO MARCH 1972 SHOW CATTLE NUMBERS UP 4.3 PERCENT (COWS ONLY 0.1); SWINE UP 10.9 PERCENT (BRED SOWS PLUS 10.4). PIGLET COUNT WAS 13.7 PERCENT HIGHER, BUT SHEEP POPULATION WAS DOWN ABOUT 5 PERCENT.

5. MEAT EXPORTS WERE UP SHARPLY AGAIN DURING JANUARY THROUGH MARCH, 1973 COMPARED SAME MONTHS OF LAST YEAR AS FOLLOWS IN TONS: FRESH AND FROZEN-- UP 3,236 TO 14,456; CANNED HAMS AND SHOULDERS-- UP 1,394 TO 8,309 AND BACON-- UP 500 TO 9,020. NO DATA IS AVAILABLE ON MEAT IMPORTS BUT WE ASSUME THEY ARE DOWN FROM THE APPROXIMATE 50,000 TON ANNUAL LEVEL OF 1972. IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT BUTTER EXPORTS WERE UP ABOUT 2,000 TONS IN FIRST QUARTER OF 1973 COMPARED LAST YEAR.
BOSTER

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